



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN
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AFGHANISTAN
BEFORE THE THIRD COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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Mr. Chairman,

In my statement today I shall endeavour to shed some light on the background of our national-democratic revolution and on the actual state of human rights in Afghanistan.

The victory of the national-democratic revolution, under the leadership of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, was not a chance phenomenon in the modern history of Afghanistan. The Revolution triumphed because the masses could not tolerate any more the inhuman tyranny of the corrupt autocratic regime and the medieval oppression under feudal and prefeudal relations which prevailed in the country, because the ruling circles could not solve the urgent socio-economic problems which were adversely affecting the life of the masses and because the people had struggled for years and in different ways against this grim and intolerable situation.

The Revolution was the logical outcome of this long and arduous struggle which after the establishment of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) on 1 January 1965, had acquired a more organized and purposeful character, paving the way to its final victory.

Before the Revolution, Afghanistan was one of the most backward countries in the world, being among the 31 least developed countries. The country had the lowest economic indicators. Its per capita income was one of the lowest in the world and the country ranked 108th among the 129 developing countries.

Feudalism in Afghanistan had exhausted its potential as a historical social formation and could go no further. It was serving no purpose other than to obstruct the path of the development

of productive forces which were seeking to be released. The newly-emerging bourgeoisie and its allies who were endeavouring to push the country onto the path of capitalism had failed in their half-hearted attempt in the face of feudal stagnation and resistance. The reaction, from which the ruling circles were drawing their power, resisted vehemently even those half-hearted attempts at the reforms considered necessary for the survival of the decaying system.

The despotic regimes, ruled by a tiny minority of exploiters, deprived the people of all their fundamental rights and freedoms. Law and order did not exist in the day-to-day affairs of the State. The executive, judicial and legislative powers if they existed at all were in the hands of cruel exploiters. Equality before the law and equality among citizens and nationalities remained on paper as mere empty phrases.

People were arbitrarily arrested, imprisoned and even executed. The State authorities did not pay any attention to the growing problems the masses were facing. Disputes among individuals were being solved in an undemocratic way, against the national interests and contrary to laws and regulations. The rights of persons belonging to the oppressed classes were denied and their interests undermined. The country was ruled by the jungle justice - "might is right".

In an attempt to save the day, Prince Daoud, the monarch's cousin, carried out a coup in 1978, and proclaimed a republic. His reformist posture lasted a very short while and it became apparent that he had stepped in to save his class from inevitable destruction.

Thus the political, economic and human rights situation in the

country went from bad to worse. This situation called, and was ripe, for a true revolution which would change the very foundation of relations of production in the country and take Afghanistan out of the medieval ages and into the twentieth century. Of course, this was possible only if the struggle of the people for liberation was led by a trusted and experienced party which could unite and guide all the national and democratic forces towards victory. In the PDPA the people of Afghanistan found such a political vanguard.

The Party believed that at the present stage in the country's development a national-democratic regime could and must replace the tyrannical regime, which represented the feudal - aristocratic system. That is, the Party believed that social progress was possible only through the implementation of basic revolutionary transformations reflecting the vital interests of the workers, peasants, craftsmen, the intellectuals, nationalities and tribes of the country, including the nomadic tribes. The new system was to embody and reflect the best political, national, cultural and religious traditions of the Afghan nation.

On 27 April 1978, the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist national-democratic revolution triumphed in Afghanistan, under the leadership of the PDPA, which was called upon to realize this noble aim. The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was proclaimed and the necessary conditions were prepared for the solution of acute and urgent problems in the interests of the people.

The triumph of the April Revolution put an end to the rule of the oppressors, and resulted in the establishment of a democratic regime in Afghanistan, reflecting the aspiration of the people and

safeguarding the long-standing interests of the masses. The Revolution put an end to the political, social and economic domination of the ruling circles representing the big landowners, compradors, and corrupt high-ranking officials, and created an atmosphere of law and order, legality and democracy for all and in the interests of all.

The liberated toilers of the country, guided by their revolutionary Party and State, began the noble task of building a new society based on the principles of social progress and justice.

Unfortunately, however, immediately after the victory of the Revolution an undeclared war was waged by the forces of imperialism, led by the United States imperialism, and its hegemonists and reactionary complices against the young democratic republic in an attempt to deprive the people of Afghanistan of enjoying the fruits of their historical victory. Counter-revolutionary bands were set up, financed, trained and armed for subversion in Afghanistan, and a number of innocent Afghan citizens were made to leave their revolutionary land through a mixture of propaganda, deceit, force and false promises.

At the same time, mistakes were committed during the initial phase of the Revolution which added to the problem. As a result, Hafizullah Amin, who had managed to infiltrate the Party, usurped power by murdering the first President of the Afghan Revolutionary Council. Under his rule, the revolutionary process was undermined from within, a reign of terror was unleashed in the country and conspiracies were hatched in complicity with the reactionary elements in the region which could have resulted in the dismemberment of Afghanistan.

This was a situation that had to be changed. The healthy and principled forces of the Party and Revolution were able to topple down the despotic rule of Amin, and the April Revolution entered a new and evolutionary phase to realize the aspirations of the people.

To establish the rule of law and order and democratic legality in the country, the DRA Government adopted several new democratic laws, rules and regulations, and issued many democratic decrees. Some of the previous rules and regulations were amended and others, if their provisions did not run counter to the lofty ideals of the Revolution, the Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the Programme of Action of the PDPA, remained valid.

The law and the regulations adopted after the triumph of the Revolution, guarantee the promotion and protection of all fundamental rights and freedoms of Afghan citizens and respect for the dignity and honour of individuals.

After the victory of the Revolution, especially its second phase, over 380 democratic decrees, rules and regulations were adopted and promulgated, which laid a firm foundation for establishing a democratic society. It is a result of the achievements scored by the Revolution that real equality before the law is guaranteed and practiced in Afghanistan.

An outstanding example of the democratic documents adopted after the Revolution is the Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. This serves as an interim constitution of the country, and it was adopted on 21 April 1980, by the DRA Revolutionary Council. Some English copies of the Fundamental

Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan are available at the side of this Conference Room.

In the introductory chapter of the Fundamental Principles it is stated that the Revolutionary Council adopted and proclaimed the Fundamental Principles "with a profound respect to, and a serious observance of, the national, historical, cultural and religious traditions of the noble people of Afghanistan".

The Fundamental Principles guarantee to each Afghan citizen all internationally accepted fundamental rights and freedoms. They give the individual the right freely and openly to express his opinion, to join the democratic and progressive social organizations, and also the right to full freedom of action in the interests of social order, national security and tranquility of Afghan society. Many provisions on equality among all Afghan citizens and all nationalities in various spheres, such as politics, economy and social life, are incorporated in the Fundamental Principles. In order to eliminate the undemocratic atmosphere and attitudes prevalent in the past in state bodies, particular attention is paid to equal rights and freedoms of Afghan citizens.

Article 28 of the Fundamental Principles guarantees that "all Afghan citizens are equal before the law. All Afghan citizens share equal rights and obligations, irrespective of their racial, national, tribal and linguistic affiliations or sex, domicile, religion, education, property and social status. Equal rights among citizens are ensured in all economic, political, social and cultural spheres..."

Democratic legality in Afghanistan is respected and observed in such a democratic and just manner that even those counter-revolutionaries who have committed grave crimes against the people, are treated equally by judicial authorities and other related bodies. Articles 28 and 30 guarantee the presumption of innocence to anyone charged with a criminal offence until their guilt has been legally established: "The accused is considered to be innocent unless otherwise found by a court of law".

Contrary to false and slanderous accusations, expressing "concern" about legality in Afghanistan and discrediting the achievements and noble aims of the April Revolution and the DRA judicial system, which is alleged "to fall short of the internationally recognized standards", sufficient attention is being paid in Afghanistan to the establishment and promotion of democratic legality and a progressive judicial system. Fair and open trials for criminals, affording them adequate time and facilities to prepare their defence, are undeniable proofs of our democratic judicial procedure.

The law provides that no one is allowed to abuse one's legal and official authority or violate the law and regulations. Certain punishments are provided by law for those who are convicted of abusing one's legal and official authority. A number of officials have been punished on charges of violating the law, abusing authority, and other crimes.

Since the triumph of the Revolution, especially its new evolutionary phase (except during the time when State power was usurped by the criminal Amin and his gang), no one has been arrested arbitrarily and no one has been accused of being guilty, unless found so by the

law effective at the time of the offence. "No one can be accused of an offence except under the provisions of the law" (Article 30 of the Fundamental Principles).

Below is a list of some of the most important legal instruments adopted by the revolutionary Government:

- Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan;
- Decree No. 6, Related to the Abolition of Usury;
- Decree No. 8, Related to Land (Democratic Water and Land Reform);
- The Law on Local Bodies of State Power and Administration;
- The Law on the Rights of the Wounded and the Families of the Martyrs of the Revolution;
- The Law on Implementation of the Punishment of Imprisonment;
- The Law on Education;
- Public Health Law;
- The Law on Protection of Historical and Cultural Heritage;
- The Law on the Organization and Authority of the Courts in Afghanistan;
- The Law on the Council of Ministers;
- Labour Law.

Some of the previous laws and regulations are still in force (except provisions in them that run counter to the Fundamental Principles and other rules and regulations adopted after the Revolution). They include:

- Penal Code;
- Civil Code;
- Criminal Code;

- Civil Service Law;
- Passport Law.

The Fundamental Principles of Afghanistan and other rules and regulations concerning citizens' rights and freedoms guarantee the following:

- the right to live a secure life;
- full freedom to practice Islam, and religious freedom for the followers of other faiths;
- the right to work;
- the right to health protection and social insurance;
- the security of domicile and communications, including telephonic, telegraphic, and other communications, except when provided otherwise by the law;
- the right to a fair trial;
- the right to defence when one is accused of a crime;
- the right to a compensation when one's conviction is reversed or one is parolled;
- the right to marry and form a family;
- the right to own private property.

I should like to quote some Articles of the Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan which are of direct relevance to the subject under discussion: Articles 28, 29 and 30.

ARTICLE TWENTY EIGHT - All Afghan citizens are equal before the law.

All Afghan citizens share equal rights and obligations irrespective of their racial, national, tribal and linguistic affiliations or sex, domicile, religion, education, parentage, assets and social status.

Equality of rights among citizens is ensured in all economic, political, social and cultural spheres.

Nobody is permitted to use his democratic rights and freedoms against the interests of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the rights of other citizens.

ARTICLE TWENTY NINE - The following democratic rights and freedoms are ensured and guaranteed for citizens of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan:

1 - The right to lead a secure life.

2 - Full freedom of practice of Islam as a sacred religion for Moslems and freedom of religious rites in the case of followers of other faiths according to law.

3 - The right to work. The government will adopt measures to ensure the right of all the people to socially useful work, control working conditions and legislate and implement progressive laws about work.

4 - The right to health protection and social insurance. The government will adopt measures with regard to creation of networks of public health organizations and if possible, through free medical services, improve social insurance to be enjoyed by the working people in case of incapacity or old age and likewise

when losing the breadearner in a family

5 - The right to education. The government will adopt measures to develop national progressive education, eradicate illiteracy, instruction in mother tongues, growth and expansion of free intermediate, high vocational and technical education.

6 - Freedom of scientific, technical, cultural and artistic activities in accord with the objectives of the Saur Revolution.

7 - The right to freely and openly express one's opinions, the right of assembly and of peaceful demonstrations and likewise the right to patriotically join democratic and progressive social organizations.

The extent of the advantage taken of the above rights will be defined by law commensurate with social order and national security and tranquility.

8 - Security of domicile and of communications including telephonic, telegraphic and other communications except in cases provided otherwise by law.

9 - The right to complain or to petition individually or collectively, to state organs.

ARTICLE THIRTY - Nobody could be accused of offence except under provisions of law.

Nobody could be arrested except according to a court warrant and under the provisions of the law valid at the time of committing the offence.

The accused is entitled to submit his defence.

The accused is considered innocent until definitely sentenced by court.

Offence is a personal affair and nobody else would be punished through its commitment.

Corporal punishment runs counter to human dignity. Torturing and prosecution are not permissible.

In establishing democratic legality in the country and introducing a fundamental reform in the legislative system, the Government of Afghanistan has been mindful of its international commitments, and it therefore acceded to several international covenants and proclaimed its support for many internationally accepted declarations and recommendations in various fields.

The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has acceded to the following international instruments:

- Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid;
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;
- Convention on Non-Applicability of the Statutory Limitations of War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity;
- Convention on Psychotropic Substances;

- Convention on Suppression of Illegal Actions Against Civil Aviation Security;

- Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others and;

- Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

The following international instruments are under consideration by the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan for ratification or accession:

- Convention Against Discrimination in Education;

- Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;

- Convention on the Prohibition of Military or any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques;

- Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects;

- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The international agreements in the field of human rights are the largest in number among those acceded to by the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

Accession to international agreements and commitment to their provisions are not a mere propaganda exercise. The DRA Government sincerely strives to carry out the aims of the international agreements which Afghanistan is a party to and implement their provisions through incorporating the appropriate decisions in the national law and regulations.

To carry out the aims of the above and other international instruments to which Afghanistan is a party, several provisions have been incorporated in various national laws and regulations.

Mr. Chairman,

No matter how hard we try to enumerate the facts pertaining to the democratic nature of our Government and its humane policies and practices, our adversaries would still arrogantly claim that these are mere words on paper and that the reality is different.

But let me assure you that since the beginning of the new phase of the revolution on 27 December 1979, the leading authorities of the Party and Government have adopted a series of concrete and effective measures to firmly protect the democratic legality and to supervise and control the observance of the law by the judicial and security organs of the State.

I wish to give certain examples of the constant vigilance maintained by the highest authorities to ensure the strict and undeviated application of the laws of the land.

The Political Bureau of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and the Presidium of the Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan issued on 25 November 1980 an important resolution under the title "On the Consolidation of Revolutionary Legality".

Paragraph 2 of this resolution stipulates "the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan is bound to resolutely control the implementation of the provisions and values of the Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, Laws, and

Decrees of the Revolutionary Council and its Resolutions by all state employees and local state organs in the capital and in the provinces".

According to paragraph 3 of this resolution, the authorities, party members and officials of the Ministry of Interior and State Information Services (KhAD) are required to ensure,... the unconditional observance of the provisions of the Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and other laws".

Subsequent paragraphs of this resolution stipulate:

"The Attorney-General Department of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan must strengthen supervision of the legality of detection and investigation of crimes and to adopt measures towards the observance of the provisions of the Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan concerning the supervision by the prosecutor's office of the implementation and observance of legality on the part of all state organs".

"The courts and the prosecutor's office must be assigned with the duty that in all cases of trampling upon the rights of the citizens, particularly in cases of illegal arrest, house search, illegal confiscation of the property of the citizens by those in charge of those affairs, should call them to account and to punish all those committing the above according to the law".

In accordance with the paragraph 10 of this resolution all party and state authorities are duty-bound to "analyze this resolution in the sessions of party committees of the provinces, ministries and offices and to utilize it as a means for training party members with the spirit of respecting the laws of the Democratic Republic

of Afghanistan and irreconcilability with all forms of law breaking".

Likewise, the resolution emphasizes that "all and any form of deviation from revolutionary legality committed by the party members must not remain unobserved or unpunished, regardless of the position they hold".

Last, but not least, the Supervision and Control Commission of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan is charged with the duty to study the question of party punishment of the in-charges who commit law breaking.

In the course of five years since the adoption of this very important resolution, 421 persons, consisting of members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and State employees, including employees of State Information Services and Police, have been charged with criminal conduct and abuse of authority and have been tried and punished according to the law. Among those tried and punished were the Secretary of Balkh Provincial Party Committee and three of his accomplices who were convicted of murdering a man without trial. They paid with their lives for their heinous crime.

The Principles of Democratic Centralism, Democratic legality and Self-criticism have been the guiding principles in the conduct of the activities of Party and State organs. We have always been the first to discover and admit our shortcomings and to take appropriate steps towards their elimination. To cite one example, I should like to refer to the proceedings of a periodic session of the Revolutionary Council held on 21 September 1984. Based on the extensive report and recommendation of Babrak Karmal, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party

of Afghanistan and President of the Revolutionary Council of Afghanistan, the Revolutionary Council adopted a detailed resolution "On the Consolidation of Revolutionary Legality and Legal Order". That resolution reads in part: "... The cases of hasty and baseless arrests, deficient investigation of crimes, superficial judicial verdicts, irrelevancy of punishment to the level of the committed crime, still occur.

"The Attorney General Office and related provincial organs do not carry out in a proper and complete manner the supervision on legality and observance of the state discipline.

"... Incidents indicating careless lenient and bureaucratic approaches of the leading authorities and responsible persons to the petitions and complaints, proposals and critical observations of people, improper and careless approach to the needs of the people, disregard of their rights and legal benefits are observed.

"The publicizing of laws and legal education of the population is at a low level. The fundamentals of legislation are not taught in higher educational institution, vocational and technical schools, colleges and basic schools.

"The struggle against violation of law and those who violate it is not reflected in a proper manner by the mass media.

"Therefore, the Revolutionary Council approves: The Council of Ministers of the DRA should consolidate its control over activities of the Ministry of Justice of the DRA, the Ministry of Interior of the DRA, the State Information Service, which are responsible for reliable defence of the revolutionary legality, internal order, interests of the society and rights of the population. Serious observance of

legality in the activities of state administration organs, ministries, departments and institutions should be maintained and the level of requests from their heads for the undeviated execution of the law and observance of the social order should be promoted.

" ...The level of responsibility of cadres for the work assigned to them should be promoted and the discipline, enhancement of readiness and specialization of the employees should be improved and the most serious observance of revolutionary legality should be secured in their activities.

" The Attorney General and other Attorney departments should take measures for the utmost use of their authority contained in the Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in execution of supervision of the implementation and observance of the laws by all central and local state organs, departments and institutions, organizations, responsible persons and the population...

" ... Measures should be taken in case when crimes were committed during the combat operation, to investigate and issue final verdict on the spot, so that the educating role of the judiciary process among the military personnel could be promoted and the consolidation of legality and prevention of violation of law in the Armed Forces could be helped...

" The Council of Ministers assigns the security and legal organs to take measures for proliferation and enhancement of the level of education of lawyers through advanced studies.

" The attention of the heads of ministries, departments, institutions, enterprises and organizations should be drawn to their individual responsibilities for the order and legal discipline in

in their respective organs, and serious and timely reaction against the anti-social behaviour of some members of their collectives.

"The local organs of state power together with security and legal organs should secure that social organizations and the collectives of working people, residential localities, struggle against the law violators, take preventive measures and rely on the active assistance of the people in consolidation of legality and legal order.

"The state and social organs, institutions, enterprises, organizations and their heads and responsible representatives should maintain careful consideration of the proposals, petitions and complaints of the population, taking proper and logical measures in connection with them, and timely notify the population of these decisions. The critical proposals and observations of the people should be taken into consideration during the design and implementation of measures aimed at consolidation of legality, intensification of struggle with crimes and maintenance of the complete social order.

"The publicity work in the field of law and legal education of the population should be improved.

"The Ministry of Justice should secure the harmonization of this task with other organs and state and social organizations.

"The Ministry of Higher and Vocational Education and the Ministry of Education should ensure the necessary preliminary methodic and organizational work for the inclusion of the fundamentals of law into the programme of all vocational higher and middle level educational institutions, vocational schools, colleges and basic schools.

"The Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior of the DRA should perform the same work for the inclusion of the fundamentals

of law into the program of their educational institutions.

"The publicity of laws and rights, statements, speeches and lectures for people, about the legal issues, is the social and professional duty of all lawyers. One of the main directions of the legal publicity and legal education is the broad explanation of new democratic legislation, the policy of the party, goals and duties of the April Revolution, the importance of economic, social and cultural transformations and also the elaboration of the meaning and objective of the party and revolutionary authority's measures for consolidation of the social discipline, legality and legal order.

"The newspapers, radio and television should explain and elaborate the contents and the importance of the new legislation, which aims at the economic and social progress and serves the interests of the working people.

"More attention should be paid to the struggle against the violators of law, and the losses which are caused by their crimes and anti-social activities to the state and the people. These should be exposed in a specific and convincing manner."

We could go on providing additional facts that the Party and the Government are working consistently and creatively to create an atmosphere of democratic legality and respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of Afghan citizens, and to build a prosperous and developed society where Afghan people live in peace, security and happiness.

In fact, democratic legality is one of the main pillars of the April Revolution and serves as a positive factor to the realization

of its lofty objectives and aspirations based on the establishment of a new society of peaceful work, freedom and justice, fraternity and equality, democracy and progress.

It is only through democratic legality that the working class, its ally - the peasants - and other toiling compatriots will be able to hold and exercise state power. Democratic legality guarantees that state power is in the hands of the majority of the people through their true representatives and is used in the interests of the whole people, and not in the interests of a small exploiting minority.

In Afghanistan, the PDPA, as the representative and vanguard of the workers, peasants and other toiling classes, is in unity with the whole people of the nation, in honestly striving to use the state power democratically for the development of the nation and in the interests of the masses in order to guarantee freedom, human rights and decent living conditions for the people of Afghanistan.

Today, under the leadership of the PDPA, basic revolutionary transformations are being implemented in the interests of the people, the national and patriotic unity of the Afghan people has been ensured in the struggle for building a new life and the toilers of the country are confident of the bright future awaiting them in spite of the difficulties created by the counter-revolution. All national and progressive forces of the country have consolidated their ranks around the PDPA, the leading and guiding force of the Afghan society.

This is indicative of the fact that the attempts of the counter-revolutionaries, inspired, financed and armed by imperialist, hegemonist

and reactionary forces to reverse the revolutionary process in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan have failed and the economic sanctions imposed by imperialist countries have no prospect of bearing fruit.

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan has earned the confidence and trust of the entire toiling population of the country as the leading political force of the people.

The National Fatherland Front, which is the symbol of national unity of all progressive, democratic and patriotic forces of Afghanistan, enjoys the full support of the people from all walks of life. The Front now rallies around itself more than 700,000 collective and individual members, encompassing the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and all social mass organizations such as trade unions, democratic organizations of Afghan youth and women, peasants' cooperatives, unions of writers, poets and journalists, Council of religious scholars and thousands of social figures representing a cross-section of the Afghan society.

A major victory was scored by the people of Afghanistan with the convocation in April 1985 of the Loya Jirgah (Grand Assembly) which constitutes the supreme decision-making body of the country. The Loya Jirgah in which 1,796 democratically elected representatives of the people, representing all social segments of the population participated, adopted destiny-making decisions on the future course of the domestic and foreign policy of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. While fully approving the internal and external policies of the Party and the Government, the

Loya Jirgah expressed gratitude to the Soviet Union and for extending all kinds of assistance to Afghanistan at one of the most difficult stages of its history.

Last year around the same time we informed the General Assembly of the efforts undertaken in connection with the drafting and adoption of a law concerning the establishment of the Local Organs of State Power and Administration. It is with satisfaction and pride that we inform the Assembly of the successful beginning of country-side elections to these local organs. The composition of these organs in those areas where the process of elections has been completed, unequivocally testifies to the representatives and democratic nature of elections and the emerging bodies. These organs are destined to assume critical role in the decision-making and execution of state affairs under conditions of widest participation by the people.

Another major achievement of the past year has been the victorious holding of the High Jirgah (Council) of Nationalities and Tribes of the Frontier Areas in which 3,700 representatives of the frontier clans, tribes and nationalities convened, in an atmosphere of democracy, to discuss not only matters of their immediate local concern, but also issues of national importance and dimension. The High Jirgah adopted, inter-alia, resolutions in support of the domestic and foreign policy of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and pledged completely to prevent the use of their territories by the counter-revolutionaries for carrying out aggressions against the people and Government of the Democratic

Republic of Afghanistan.

Last year also witnessed increasing popular participation in the ranks and activities of other social organizations and institutions.

In the economic front, the achievements of the revolutionary Government have also been a source of great hopes and encouragement. In spite of the destructive undeclared war and virtual economic blockade by imperialist countries, the gross national product (GNP) and gross domestic product (GDP) rose by 11 and 4 per cent respectively compared to the year of 1978. Mining and energy scored 11.4 per cent against the output of 1978. There has been a 3.4-fold increase in the number of transport vehicles and 4.3-fold increase in the quantity of transported goods. In the agricultural, cattle-raising and forestry sectors the gross products registered a 7.3 per cent increase while in the same period foreign trade has recorded one and a half times increase. Investment in the sector of construction shows a 19.9 per cent increase and the overall state revenues reflected an 84.4 per cent increase.

These achievements have directly benefitted the working population of the country. For instance, in the last five years, workers' salaries were increased by twofolds and of the low-level state employees by 20 per cent.

While our economic accomplishments have been mainly due to the correct policies pursued by the Government and to the hard work and enthusiasm of our people, the selfless and all-sided co-operation of friendly countries, first and foremost the Soviet Union, has been of great significance. For example, more than

70 large and medium-sized projects have been constructed or are under construction with the technical and economic assistance of the Soviet Union. The output of economic installations built with the assistance of the Soviet Union accounts for 60 per cent of overall industrial product and 75 per cent of state-sector industrial product in the country.

Within the democratic land and water reform more than 320 thousand landless and petty landholder families have received more than 700 thousand hectares of land. Thousands of co-operatives and dozens of mechanized agricultural centres have been established to provide improved seeds, fertilizer, machinery and technical advice to peasants.

More than one million two hundred thousand Afghans have so far graduated from more than 26 thousand literacy courses established since the beginning of the revolution throughout the country. It is expected that illiteracy will be completely abolished all over Afghanistan by the year 1990.

Since the victory of the revolution the number of doctors, hospital beds and state-run pharmacies have doubled.

In all these facts and realities, what stands tall is the strong will and unshakeable determination of the Afghan people undeviatedly to march ahead with revolutionary fervour towards the establishment of peaceful, developed and prosperous society and a brilliant and happy future for the next generation.

Nevertheless, if the achievements made do not tally with the expectations of the revolutionary Party and State of Afghanistan

it is because the continuing havoc caused by the undeclared war has made it difficult to meet fully the expectations, aspirations and tasks which have been formulated by the PDPA for building a new, prosperous Afghan society based on the principles of social progress and justice, and which enjoy the full support of all the people.

The revolutionary process in Afghanistan has proved its irreversibility and the enemies of the people, homeland and Revolution are not capable of depriving the militant people of Afghanistan of the right to build their bright future. And this is, in fact, the main achievement of the April Revolution in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, whether our enemies like it or not.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.